

IN THE CLAIMS

11. (currently amended) A method for manufacturing a bearing element comprising the steps of:

forming a plurality of layers from a combination of a first material and a second material, wherein a first of said layers formed from a plurality of materials comprising at least one of polytetrafluoroethylene fibers, glass fibers, carbon fibers, and combinations thereof, and wherein a second of said layers is formed against the first layer and is formed from a single material, such that the first layer comprises the first material, the second layer comprises the second material, and the third layer comprises the first material;

forming the bearing element from the plurality of layers, wherein each layer is formed from at least one of weaving materials and braiding materials;

plasma etching each of the bearing element plurality of layers to facilitate enhancing bonding between adjacent layers; and

impregnating each of the bearing element plurality of layers with a polyimide resin comprising polytetrafluoroethylene powder.

13. (canceled)

14. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 13 wherein said step of forming the plurality of layers further comprises the steps of:

forming the first layer from a woven mat of the first material;

forming the second layer from a woven mat of the second material; and

forming the third layer from a woven mat of the first material.

15. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 13 wherein said step of forming the plurality of layers further comprises the steps of:

forming the first layer from a braid of the first material;

forming the second layer from a braid of the second material; and

forming the third layer from a braid of the first material.

17. (once amended) A method in accordance with Claim 13 wherein:

the first layer comprises polytetrafluoroethylene fibers and glass fibers;

the second layer comprises glass fibers;

the third layer comprises polytetrafluoroethylene fibers and glass fibers; and

the glass fibers are coated with an epoxy sizing.

18. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 17 wherein carbon fibers are substituted for the glass fibers.

19. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 17 wherein quartz fibers are substituted for the glass fibers.

20. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 17 wherein a silane sizing is substituted for the epoxy sizing.